

Sestre milosrdnice



University Hospital

HISTORICAL REVIEW

This year, our Hospital celebrates a great and significant event – the 170th anniversary of its existence.

The Hospital was founded in 1846. The rich and interesting history of our Hospital is highly relevant for the history of Croatian medicine and health care; however, the reason is not just the high figure – 170 years of the Hospital existence but primarily the fact that our Hospital had the leading role in the development of Croatian medicine, in the implementation and development of a number of medical professions, in the establishment and development of the School of Medicine in Zagreb, in the scientific work and development of health care of not only our patients but of the population at large, while the Hospital influence on the professional, educational and scientific activities was frequently spreading to the neighboring countries as well.

The Hospital was founded at St. Vincent de Paul Nunnery in Frankopanska Street in Zagreb, primarily owing to the efforts invested by the Zagreb cardinal Juraj Haulik. In the beginning, only female patients were admitted to the Hospital; however, as early as 1871, the Hospital was relocated to Ilica 83, where male patients were admitted as well. From 1885, the

Hospital was divided into two parts, internal medicine section and surgical section with about 300 beds. As this building was short of space, in 1884 construction of the new Hospital premises in Vinogradska Street began and started working on July 5, 1894. The Hospital consisted of eight buildings, three departments and eight outbuildings. The Hospital had the heating system and lighting, so it was no surprise that on his visit in 1895, the emperor Francis Joseph I proclaimed it one of the prestigious hospitals in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. At the time, our Hospital went through fast, high-quality and even development, not only within the Monarchy but also relative to other European countries, mostly owing to its hard-working and self-denying Sisters of Charity, cardinal Haulik, Zagreb and Croatia government led by Dr Isidor Kršnjavi, the then Head of the Department of Religious Affairs and Education, who gave approval for Hospital construction, and of course, Hospital physicians. Our physicians received their education in Vienna, Graz and Prague, having transferred novel medical knowledge to our Hospital and diligently applying it in the treatment of their patients. For example, Dr Radovan Marković completed residency in pediatrics at St. Anne Children's Hospital in Vienna and the first Department of Pediatrics headed by him was opened as early as 1904. Special mention should



The Sisters of Mercy Hospital before World War 1. Administrative building and the old chapel. In front of the hospital a carriage; on this side of Vinogradska cesta a cornfield.



*The Sisters of Mercy Hospital –
administrative building: current view*

be made here of Dr Teodor Wickerhauser, our surgeon, who "... laid foundations of all surgical professions in Croatia...", as noted by Dr Vladimir Čepulić. Together with his disciples, Wickerhauser worked on the development of many surgical professions, and his followers subsequently opened first departments of ophthalmology, ENT, urology, dermatovenereology, etc. All these Wickerhauser's disciples were well-known names of Croatian medicine, to mention only Čačković, Mašek, Hühn, Blašković, and others. Therefore, Teodor Wickerhauser and his disciples Miroslav Čačković and Dragutin Mašek were appointed first professors at the Zagreb School of Medicine. Professor Miroslav Čačković was the first dean and Professor Dragutin Mašek the first vice-dean.

Later, during 170 years of the Hospital existence, the term 'first' was used many times, e.g., the first x-ray machine, Salvarsan injection, cobalt bomb, incubators, electromyography, artificial lungs, etc. We were the leading institution in pathology, pulmonology, physical medicine, establishment of glaucoma unit, pituitary unit, coronary unit, etc. Not all these advancements can be listed here but their descriptions can be found in Hospital monographs, as well as in this *Acta Clinica Croatica* section, which has been appearing since 2000.

This anniversary may serve as a reminder that we should not forget the past of the Hospital and that

each new generation of physicians, nurses, engineers and technicians, clerks and other Hospital employees should be familiar with the Hospital rich past. We feel proud indeed that some Zagreb streets have been named after our physicians (Kosirnik, Mašek, Wickerhauser, Čačković, Šercer), and it is really a pleasure that our Hospital is popularly known as Vinogradska Hospital, being known as such among our patients and population at large for the whole century now; they walk along the Hospital premises, they have been treated here, born here and dying here. The care provided by our nurses deserves special note because our nursing has also marked the past of the Croatian nursing with the first educated nurses, first midwifery school, first child nursing school, and physical therapy and occupational therapy school. The College of Nursing has been working at the Hospital since 1960.

Of course, the history of our Hospital does not consist exclusively of the first departments, first procedures, etc. Our Hospital has received recognition for a number of accepted methods, different procedures, and organizational and professional activities, having thus ensured high quality work of the institution. Throughout its history, the Hospital has been faced with financial difficulties, wars, and various political and ideological burdens. However, it has always stayed just the Hospital and we do hope it will remain so in the future.

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